

# NewsConnection

A monthly newsletter for DSHS staff and friends

## As tragedy hits the nation, the DSHS family reaches out with compassion and action



Our nation was shocked on the morning of Sept. 11 as four commercial airplanes were hijacked and flown into the World Trade Centers in New York City, the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. and the fields of rural Pennsylvania.

In the face of this national tragedy, the people of DSHS are reaching out to help the victims and their families in whatever way they can. The following is just a sampling of the actions being taken in offices across the department by employees, plus several reflections.

**Okanogan Community Services Office**, where “our CSO is small, however the hearts of our staff are very large” — Following the devastating attacks,

staff in the Okanogan County CSO are trying to deal with the roller coaster of emotions felt by others across the state and nation. The need to help, or show support quickly filled the hearts and minds of staff.

Following the initiative of the Okanogan CSO on the morning of Sept. 12,

Okanogan County Commissioners, a local radio station and the Omak Police Department Okanogan displayed American flags, ribbons or banners as a show of love and support to fellow Americans.

Okanogan County CSO staff made large ribbons and tied them to trees surrounding the building. Colocated staff from CSO, Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Home and Community Services (HCS), Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), Division of Fraud Investigations (DFI), and Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration (JRA) proudly wore red, white, and blue ribbons saying “God Bless America.”

“Staff are scheduling leave to donate blood to the American Red Cross. A huge American flag continues to be prominently displayed in a front window of the facility as a testimony to our staffs ‘pledge of allegiance’ to our great nation,” said Sally Humphrey.

**A Shared Moment of Silence** — On the statewide day of prayer and remembrance on Sept. 14, Medical Assistance Administration’s helpline staff, who handle some 25,000 calls a month, dimmed overhead lights and shared a moment of silence with callers out of respect for those who were injured or lost their lives on Sept. 11. Together staff and callers reflected on the immensity of what happened in New York City.

Staff in all work areas at Consolidated Support Services in Medical Lake secured their work areas and joined others at the Circle Drive at Lakeland Village for the statewide moment of silence at 12:30 p.m.

(Continued on page 4)



### One parent's thoughts

*As I dropped my children off at daycare this morning, my two-year-old son began to cry. I sat down with him for a minute to console him. Then I told him I had to leave for work. Then I began to think about what is more important to me, more important to him. Is it worth it for me to be a few minutes late for work while I comfort my child? Of course it is.*

*This past week has changed my life. Changed the way I feel, the way I look at things, people. How maybe we could all be a little nicer to each other. Be thankful for our families and what we already have. Most of us are too busy to pay attention to things that don't concern us, until something like this happens.*

*Today when I pick my children up from daycare, I will hug them tight and thank God that I still have them and they have me. I hope everyone else will do the same.*

*Kelly Grozier, Office Assistant Senior, Bremerton CSO, September 18, 2001*

Photo courtesy of Photodisc®

**Late publication:** Your NewsConnection is late this month because we held up publication in order to include reflections on how DSHS staff are responding to the national tragedy.

## Secretary Braddock gives guidance

*Editor's note: Secretary Dennis Braddock sent the following message on Sept. 11 to all staff on the day of the terrible events in New York City and Washington, D.C.*

Dear Fellow Employee of DSHS:

In this time of national tragedy, I want to thank you for the work you do and for the care you show to the people and communities of our state. I suspect it will not be “business as usual” for some time in our nation, but DSHS will be staying open and continuing services to those in need.

In the hours and days ahead, many of us will be awaiting word about loved ones in other parts of the country. We will be concerned for co-workers, community partners and clients who are impacted by the terrorist attack.

Many of us have jobs that call for us to help people hold their lives together in times of

personal crisis, and the need may be especially great during a time of national trauma. As we remain dedicated to keeping DSHS offices fully operational in delivering services to the public, we will need to be aware and understanding of the stresses that co-workers, community partners and clients may be experiencing.

I want to assure managers and supervisors that they have the support of DSHS in exercising the flexibility they need to maintain our full operations and services while recognizing the needs of people affected by these national events.

We all owe a special debt of thanks to the DSHS employees who serve in institutions and critical care settings where flexibility is more difficult to achieve.

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### The NewsConnection

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# Secretary's CORNER

by Dennis Braddock

# Words about our work

Employees, clients, and the public share thoughts on the work we do

Send your thoughts and/or letters from clients to Secretary Dennis Braddock, attention: Letters to The News Connection, P.O. Box (Mailstop) 45010, Olympia WA 98504; via e-mail BraddD@dshs.wa.gov



Medicaid is posing a new challenge for the Department of Social and Health Services. The total cost of our medical assistance is growing by an unsustainable half billion dollars a year and it has nearly doubled its portion of the total agency budget in only a decade. Our funding sources are growing much more slowly.

But the inescapable fact for us today is that Medicaid offers us few good choices. Perhaps you remember the “Kobayashi Maru,” which was the no-win examination scenario that young Starfleet Academy officers were tested against in “Star Trek.” Only one officer ever defeated the Kobayashi Maru, and that was James Kirk. How did he do it? He changed the rules.

In a nutshell, that is why we are drafting a demonstration waiver proposal for the federal government this fall. Medicaid offers us no-win alternatives in these tight budget times. If money falls short, Medicaid expects us to chop entire programs, or to pull back from previous commitments. That is not what our Legislature intended. That is also not what our clients should reasonably expect.

But if the waiver is approved allowing us to make rule changes, we will have the freedom to look for new ideas and new ways of managing the uncontrolled costs that currently handcuff us. Here are some of those changes that we are proposing:

- Small premiums and co-pays for working low-income families. The waiver would restrict these to a total of less than five percent of any family's income – and they would only apply to families earning more than the Federal Poverty Level.
- The waiver also would let us deal with uncontrolled enrollment. It would let DSHS limit participation in a program when funding will not sustain additional enrollees. By using waiting lists and attrition, we can stretch our resources without canceling programs outright.
- In some cases, we can restructure benefit designs to save money without denying vital services. Again, this will let us protect vulnerable populations at risk of losing all their coverage.
- With the permission of the federal government, we could recycle unused funds from the State Children's Health Insurance Program, putting these dollars to work on other areas of medical assistance rather than shipping them back to Washington, D.C., for distribution to other states.

Perhaps outside of the “Star Trek” movies there are no perfect solutions. But like Captain Kirk, we need to be practical and proactive in behalf of those who depend on us. Hard work and good decisions are needed now.

*Editor's note: Scott sent the following note to his summer colleagues in the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration where he was a summer intern. He gave permission to share his words in NewsConnection. Each summer, many young people work side-by-side with professionals throughout the department. They learn much, and they also provide fresh perspectives.*

Dear JRA Headquarters Staff,  
I'd like to thank you all for making my internship this summer such a wonderful experience. Coming into this internship, I never would have thought I would learn all the things I've learned in the past two months. Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedules to teach me and answer my

questions. There were times when I felt overwhelmed with all the information being thrown at me such as all the acronyms in the beginning, but it was always nice to know that I could ask any one of you for help and explanation.

Even though my internship was only for two months, I was able to watch and observe many things throughout the JRA system. One thing I observed was how hardworking and dedicated all the staff were. I find myself in awe how you all are able to get the job done well when the clock is ticking in your ears and knowing that there are many more assignments and projects to tackle.

It was such a privilege for me to have an opportunity to work with such

great people like you all. I truly believe that the majority of an individual's character develops and grows from the experiences he/she has from their surrounding environment such as the people they interact with. This can be a good or bad thing like you all have seen with your work, but I just want to say my experience with each and every one of you has been nothing but positive and I thank you all so much for being such great influences.

I really mean it when I say I hope that our paths cross again in the future. Take care everyone!

Sincerely, Scott Nguy  
Summer '01 Intern

# Litigation News

By Bernie Friedman, J.D.  
Special Assistant to the Secretary for Loss Prevention and Risk Management

E-mail is an easy, informal, and convenient way to communicate. Many of us now use it as a main way to interact in the workplace.

Because of the informality of e-mail, however, there exists the ordinary human tendency under the circumstances to be humorous or even frivolous on occasion. I am sure I do as much of it as anybody else.

Keep in mind, however, the e-mail messages you send and receive on state computer equipment are generally disclosable under the Public Records Act (unless subject to an exception) or discoverable in litigation pursuant to the rules of discovery (unless privileged). Anything and everything you write may become public information.

Does this mean you have to stifle your normal impulse to be friendly and witty? Well, not entirely. Remember, however, we are at work using state equipment to carry on the people's business. We all should give some thought to what we have written before we

press the Send button. Ask yourself, for instance, would you have said the same thing in a written letter, or would the comment in question be inappropriate on paper on DSHS letterhead.

Almost nothing that in context was justifiably hilarious looks funny three years later in court, in front of a jury. A perfectly appropriate sardonic comment now may later look to a jury like unprofessional frivolity.

Here a couple of thoughts to keep in mind when you are writing e-mail. Look at what you have written and ask yourself whether it would be a source of pride or pleasure to you if it were to appear on the front page of your local newspaper. If not, seriously reconsider sending it, because it may in actual fact wind up there.

A second thing you ought to

think about doing before you send something is reread it, prefacing the message with the phrase, “Ladies and gentlemen of the jury.” If what follows suddenly does not sound just right, consider revising.

It is not necessary to employ only the grimmest, most serious language in e-mail. You should, however, exercise some care about what you write, lest you expose yourself and the department to criticism for lack of professionalism.

To close with more good news from the litigation arena, just two days ago as of this writing, we learned the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit overturned an \$8 million jury verdict against the department. This was a case where we thought we had done nothing wrong and the jury went way overboard.

# Find out what the news media is saying about DSHS issues

Articles about DSHS and issues of concern to the department are collected daily from newspapers in Washington state, national newspapers, and selected publications by the Communications Division. These electronic clippings are available on the DSHS Intranet at:  
<http://intra.dshs.wa.gov/commrel/newsclips>



# New online employee newsletter launched

Check out the new weekly online newsletter, *Inside DSHS*. Each week we bring you timely information of concern. DSHS is the equivalent of a medium-sized city. With over 18,000 employees, many of us were personally affected by the recent horrendous acts of terrorism against our country. In addition to sharing your experiences in *The NewsConnection*, we will also feature them in *Inside DSHS* over the next few weeks.

In addition, our challenge to help improve the lives of people in Washington goes on. We will continue to share with you stories of success, examples of how DSHS workers expertise and compassion has changed peoples' lives, and, in some cases, saved lives.

Secretary Dennis Braddock is committed to communicate effectively with the employees of DSHS and to use the strengths of technology to accomplish that. Through *Inside DSHS* we are able to get our news out quicker, plus link you to other online information and resources.

Many of you have taken the time to offer suggestions on how we can make *Inside DSHS* meaningful to you. We've made some changes to the format as a result as well as explored several article ideas. Please continue to share your thoughts and ideas.

*Inside DSHS* is located on the DSHS Intranet site at <http://DSHSSecretary.dshs.wa.gov/insideDSHS>. You can also reach the newsletter from the DSHS Intranet home page at <http://intra.dshs.wa.gov>.





# Teams improve services through the quality approach

This month we share with you the successes of DSHS quality teams featured in the most recent Blue Book published by the Governor's Office. Using quality principles and approaches, they are making a difference in improving how we deliver services to our clients across the state.

## CONSULTATION IMPROVES QUALITY IN BOARDING HOMES

Historically, licensing inspections and complaint investigations have been the primary methods used to assure boarding home providers adhere to statutory regulations for quality of care, quality of life and safety of residents. A group of staff, providers, community groups, long term care ombudsmen and residents recommended that consultation to providers and staff by registered nurses could improve quality of care and compliance with statutory requirements.

The consultation model included on-site facility visits, targeted training and telephone consultation. The program was offered throughout the state on a voluntary basis. The program was well received by providers and the results positive for residents, providers and participating staff.

**Results**

- 81 percent of boarding home providers voluntarily participated in the program.
- 94 percent of the boarding home staff said the consultation helped them to comply with requirements.
- Quality of care (86 percent), life (79 percent) and safety (65 percent) measures showed significant improvement with consultation.
- Of participating boarding homes that had a follow-up inspection, 76 percent had no citations in areas covered by the consultation. The remaining providers (24 percent) were cited for minimal quality issues.
- Over 1,700 boarding home, referral and inspection staff were trained.
- Boarding home residents, providers and staff were very satisfied with the program.
- 94 percent of providers and staff indicated that the program helped them provide improved care and meet statutory requirements.

**Team members:** DSHS: Cuca Botello, Aimee Derr, Theresa Kochevar, Alice Mahar, Lori Melchiori, Sue Poltl, Shake Sarkis, Greg Smick, Nancee Tardif, Saif Hakim, Tammi Hardiman, Diana Johnson, Shirley Mohr, Karen Nodolf, Marianne Neff-Daniels; Providers: Vivian Currie, Marty Davis, Kary Hyre, Joy Kane, Kathy Marshall, Shannon McCartor, Ed Midkiff, Sandy Morgan, Deb Murphy, Linda Petrie, Jerry Reilly, Louise Ryan, Lauri St.Ours, Karen Tynes, Nancy Watkins; Research: Neva Crogan, Intercollegiate College of Nursing, Washington State University

## FAST TRACK BATCHING INITIATIVE STREAMLINES SHELTON CSO

Support staff spend a considerable amount of time associating incoming documents with the correct case and worker. A Quality Improvement Team at the Shelton Community Services Office streamlined the process for sorting and distributing case-related documents to the right workers.

Employees are now issued colored stamps with their names pre-printed on them and space to enter a client identification number. These stamps are placed on all client documents being sent out. When the document is returned to the office for processing, support staff can easily identify the worker and case from the stamp.

**Results**

- A 65 percent decrease in time needed to research, identify and deliver paper work to the appropriate staff
- Mail is routed to the correct worker
- Reduction in lost mail
- Mail for co-located agencies identified easier and faster

**Team Members:** Shelly Alonso, Shelly Anderson, Teri Anderson, Gene Biddinger, Elvia Jensen, Judy Mehan

## EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION TEAM IMPROVES SURVEY TOOL

This quality improvement team examined ways to improve the Employee Satisfaction Survey developed by the Department of Personnel in four key areas: (1) increasing the survey response rate; (2) clarifying the managerial positions that survey respondents are being asked to rate; (3) making it easier to sort comments by survey topic; and (4) making it easier to tabulate survey results.

**Results**

- By better defining survey elements and questions, the Division of Child Support (DCS) and its employees could be more responsive to areas needing attention and change. By changing the survey format, results are available faster.
- The team developed an online version of the survey that preserves the anonymity of survey respondents making it much easier for employees to complete and encouraging participation.
- Seven out of every 10 DCS employees completed the survey representing a 70 percent response rate, which exceeds the typical validation rate by nearly three times.
- Survey results for year 2000 were compiled and available for distribution in less than 60 days. The 1998 paper-based survey took over six months to score and compile.
- DCS was the first state agency to conduct the Employee Satisfaction Survey electronically. The online version of the survey has been shared with the Department of Personnel for adaptation and use by other state agencies.

**Team members:** Bruce Sommerville, leader, Adolfo Capestany, Elsie Neal, David Smith-Denny, Georgia Goodson, Cynthia Tucker, Barbro Donithan, Sharron Weatherman, Julie Woods, Vicki Brown, and Jerry Winch.

## OFFICES ESTABLISH STANDARD ADOPTION HOME STUDY PROCESS

When children are removed from their homes because of child abuse and neglect, the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) works to provide them with permanent homes at the earliest possible date.

When a child cannot safely return home, adoption provides the safe and permanent family every child deserves. DCFS uses adoption home studies to evaluate whether prospective adoptive families can permanently provide for the child's safety, health and welfare.

The adoption home study practices varied among the offices, particularly in the handling and prioritization of the applications.

DCFS and the Division of Licensed Resources (DLR) teamed together to standardize and improve the adoption home study process in the Region 3 counties of Snohomish, Whatcom, Skagit, San Juan, and Island.

The team examined the current process, identified law and policy requirements, and surveyed customers to obtain valuable feedback. They standardized and consolidated forms and created a status letter to improve communication with prospective adoptive families.

The offices reached consensus in developing a protocol to prioritize applications. The work of the team resulted in a more user friendly, culturally responsive, and streamlined adoptive home study process that standardizes and improves practice across the region.

**Results**

- Reduced number of forms applicants are required to complete by 25 percent, from eight to six
- Standardized the home study process throughout the region
- Established a fair, consistent and culturally responsive application process
- Improved customer satisfaction for adoptive families

**Team members:** Gayle Austin, Teri Clark, Katherine Gabriel, Cristina Limpens, Merrie O'Meara, Diana Patterson, Janet Patterson, Malay Chakrabarti and Gayle Davis



# Staff take action to help

*(Continued from page 1)*  
**Native American Unit drummers share Spirit Healing** — The Region 4 Native American Unit Drumming Group joined many others at the Seattle Center International Fountain vigil Saturday, Sept. 15. Using the Spirit Healing Drum, members draped one drummer’s father’s World War 11 flag over the drum, invited a fireman to join them, and sang three songs, including the Honor Song for loved ones lost and the families of the loved ones in pain and for all healing, according to Patricia Goldenhawk, the drum keeper.

**Foster children send messages of support** — Renee Harvey, adoption specialist in Region 5, shared the following: Last week, unable to concentrate, I sat gazing at the pictures in my office of the many foster children that I knew, who had to be confused and troubled about the terrible events that undoubtedly were intensifying their insecurities. Just then I received a call from eight-year-old Miguel who got right to the point. “I want to help those kids who got hurted ‘cause of their Dads getting lost and stuff. But I already spent my allowance, and I don’t have very much blood so I drew a picture to make them feel better. Can you send it to them for me?”

Of course I promised that I would, and from that little boy’s effort to offer solace flowered the idea to encourage our children to draw and make cards for the children who “got hurted.” I contacted my foster families, many who were already encouraging similar actions. So far, I have a bag of cards and letters, which I will send to a friend in New York, now out of work, who is volunteering for the Red Cross. She will see that the messages of caring from our children are given to those who need them.

Anyone wishing to participate can contact me at my e-mail or send directly to me at DCFS.

**Region 2 Yakima celebration changes** — DCFS Region 2 Administrator Al Garcia is heading to Olympia to work for JRA in headquarters. His Region 2 coworkers and friends were planning a celebration. Instead Rey Pascua, a program manager, told Garcia, “Your friends and staff who were planning on celebrating with you on Wednesday do have a gift for you. They have given their permission to donate their dinner reservation payments to the Yakima Valley Chapter of the American Red Cross in your name, with funds directed toward disaster relief in New York and Washington, D.C.

“As one donor wrote, “This is a great idea, especially as a tribute to Al, whose primary interest is always in the welfare of children and families...” As of Sept. 14, the donated amount was \$765.

**Region 1 Community Services Division takes action** — Americans don’t wait for orders, they simply jump and get the job done, shared Kathy Shober, CSD Region 1 administrator, quoting Alexis

de Tocqueville, an 18th Century Frenchman. That is exactly what occurred in Region 1. While mourning the loss of our fellow Americans, Region 1 CSD made and sold red, white, and blue ribbons and supportive buttons so that the money could be donated to the American Red Cross.

Within a few days, the Community Services Offices raised in excess of \$1,100. CSO staff brought in American flags and posted them to show support. Staff are wearing red, white, and blue ribbons, buttons, earrings, clothing, fingernail polish and an array of other unique ways to show their support. Others also donated blood in an effort to assist in this time of need.

Nick Clemenson, program manager as well as the Commander at the John R. Monahan VFW Post 51, said, “I am proud of the tremendous support for our fallen Americans. Flying our American flag brings us together as a nation. We all need to remember our veterans that have paid the ultimate price for freedom. Looking at the many flags demonstrates to me that the American flag stands for freedom and strength.”

Clemenson also noted concern for our veterans and active reservists. “We have veterans on staff, and some of them are taking this very hard. They need our support and understanding. We also have many reservists awaiting orders for active duty. I am confident that my coworkers will continue to support our veterans and active reservists.”

**Offices across the state schedule fundraisers** — A very small sampling of the fundraisers include: a silent auction planned by the Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse staff in headquarters; Smokey Point co-located Aging and Adult Services Administration and DCFS staff planned to sell pizza and host a bake sale; and the Federal Way Child Protective Services office planned a silent auction.

Spokane staff of color have been holding meetings for several months to become acquainted with each other and create a sense of unity and support for each other. After the shock of Sept. 11 wore off, a decision was made to organize a fundraiser to support relief efforts for the victims of our national tragedy and their families. Within three days, staff of color organized a lunch and served Indian Tacos for donations. They raised \$535.88, which will be donated to the American Red Cross on behalf of Spokane DCFS.

“As a multicultural support group, we are acutely aware of and distressed by the backlash against American Arabs and Middle Easterners. We urge all staff to refocus on our commitment to diversity and to model respect and tolerance for everyone in this United States as well as respect for each other,” wrote a Spokane DCFS staff person.

# DSHS called model of community, environmental leadership

DSHS was recently called a “model for its community and environmental leadership for other companies to follow” by two federal agencies.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Transportation honored DSHS with a Certificate of Recognition for meeting the National Standard of Excellence for Employer-Provided Commuter Benefits.

In receiving the award, the federal agencies noted that DSHS has demonstrated a commitment to commute trip reduction (CTR). The department’s CTR program includes: financial incentives of up to a maximum of \$40 per month for employees using alternative commute means to work; preferential parking spaces close to building entrances for ride-share vehicles parked at the agency’s

worksites throughout the state; convenient on-site amenities, such as lockers, showers, bicycle racks, and cafeterias.

Other CTR incentives are: Compressed workweek, flexible work schedules, and teleworking from home or from a regional workstation closer to home; a guaranteed ride home for alternative commuters if an emergency arises while at work; recognition of employees for special CTR achievements through awards and trophies; sponsorship of alternative transportation campaigns, and educating employees about the CTR program by periodic publications, Ride-Match data, CTR bulletin boards, and e-mails.

In support of the CTR program, an employee transportation coordinator is assigned at each of the agency’s affected worksites. The CTR program is administered by the Lands and Buildings Division.

## Collecting donations on Lopez Island

— Ana Justin, a social worker 3 with Children’s Administration who works in Friday Harbor, participated with a small group of Red Cross volunteers who set up a Red Cross donation table outside the only grocery store on the island. Between Wednesday and Friday over \$9,000 was raised. The majority of the donations were \$50 or less.

## For people who want to contribute to relief efforts through the Combined Fund Drive (CFD), the following are ways you can help:

- Fundraisers: The contributions can be donated to American Red Cross by indicating its charity code on the CFD Contribution Form. Under the box of Social Security Number, put “Fundraiser” in the box. On the check, make sure to note “American Red Cross, For Terrorist Disaster Relief, National Disaster Relief.” See the list of charities on the CFD Web site: <http://hr.dop.wa.gov/cfd/contents.htm>.
  - Individual Contributions: Complete the CFD Contribution Form and include Social Security Number. Indicate the charities you select and their charity code numbers on the form and the check(s) you make out to the CFD, if you choose to send a check(s). You may also contribute by monthly payroll deduction without sending a check.
- In DSHS, all the CFD Contribution Forms and Checks should be sent to the CFD Executive Ron Holtcamp at MS 45204. He can be reached at (360) 902-0700 if you have any questions regarding the Contribution Forms.

# Diversity Calendar

Each month *The NewsConnection* features special dates, provided by the Division of Access and Equal Opportunity. If you have a special date you would like included in the next calendar, e-mail Patte King at [Kingpl@dsht.wa.gov](mailto:Kingpl@dsht.wa.gov). Not all dates can be included due to length constraints.

## OCTOBER

- NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH
- 1 Nigeria: Independence Day
  - 2 Gandhi’s Birthday
  - 3 Korea: National Foundation Day
  - 8 US: Columbus Day
  - 11 Eleanor Roosevelt’s Birthday
  - 14-20 National Diversity Week
  - 15 Shab-E-Miraj (Islamic)
  - 24 United Nation’s Day
  - 21 Somalia: National Day
  - 27 International Creole Day
  - 28 Daylight Savings Time Ends
  - Greek National Day
  - 31 Halloween

## NOVEMBER

- NATIONAL AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE MONTH
- 1 All Saints’ Day
  - Mexico: Day of the Dead
  - 3 Japan: Culture Day
  - 6 Election Day
  - 9 Cambodia: Independence Day
  - 12 Birth of Baha’u’llah (Baha’i)
  - 11 Veterans Day
  - 14 India: Children’s Day
  - 16 Ramaden (Islamic)
  - 22 U.S.: Thanksgiving Day
  - 23 State Holiday
  - 27 Hmong New Year
  - 30 Philippines: National Heroes Day
  - Scotland: St. Andrew’s Day



# Letter from Secretary Braddock

(Continued from page 1)

We will do our best to keep you up to date on information to help you in your job. In addition to periodic updates from me and from your administration, we will post information on the Secretary’s DSHS Intranet site at <<http://intra.dshs.wa.gov/SecretarysNews/#memos>> and on a temporary “Information for Employees” link from the DSHS home page <<http://www.wa.gov/dshs>>

Also, we have recently established a toll-free employee information line – 1-866-DSHS-EMP (or -1-866-374-7367) – where we will record messages related to

this national emergency.

Access Washington <http://access.wa.gov/> is posting regular traffic information on the state government Internet home page.

Day in and day out, you are a vital part of the fabric of Washington and its communities. These tragic events remind me of the special work we do to assist people through traumatic life events and crisis. Now more than ever, our patience, tolerance and compassion is needed to comfort our fellow human beings and to assure our families, especially our children, that they are not in harm’s way.

*Sincerely,* Dennis Braddock  
Secretary

## Addiction hurts, treatment does make a difference

By Fred Garcia, Chief of Program Services  
Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse

How often have we heard someone with an alcohol or drug problem say, “The only person I’m hurting is myself?” Almost always there is a parent, child, sibling or friend that is deeply wounded by their loved one’s substance abuse and its consequences.

Alcohol and other drug abuse remains Washington State’s number one health problem, as well as a major drain on our economy.

The economic cost of alcohol and drug abuse in Washington was \$2.54 billion in 1996 — \$531 for every resident. For every public dollar invested in alcohol/drug treatment in Washington State, \$3.71 is saved in medical care and

criminal justice costs over the following four years. Yet, less than one percent of the state budget goes to treatment. As a result, the public system is able to treat only one in five people who are clinically and financially eligible for treatment.

When citizens demand adequate resources for treatment, and show greater compassion and understanding for those suffering from addiction, we will see more people accessing treatment and regaining their health, productivity, and ability to be nurturing, responsible parents.

In order to be as effective as possible with limited resources, we need to maximize what we do have.

One such resource is the federal Center for Substance Abuse Treatment Web site. This Web site contains comprehensive information on addiction and recovery, including scripts of Web casts and Web chats from discussions about how families, friends or coworkers can get beyond their denial to stop a drug or alcohol problem before it starts or to intervene in a loved one’s addiction. The Web site is <http://www.health.org/recoverymonth/2001/multimedia/index.htm>.

The following is an adaptation of two questions and answers on this site:

### What should I say and not say to a friend with a drug addiction?

First, tell your friend that you are worried about his or her drug use; that you’re scared about what that use is doing to them. Tell your friend that you miss them— you miss your old buddy.

Secondly, find people who are connected to your friend, like a parent or a spouse. Make a plan to intervene with your friend. You can get help with intervention by calling the 24-Hour Alcohol/Drug Helpline in Seattle at (206) 722-3700 or 1-800-562-1240.

# Understanding traumatic stress responses

## Advice for victims and / or family members

You have just had a terrible experience. Whether you were involved in the traumatic incident yourself, or are a family member, or friend, you are experiencing very powerful emotional stress, far beyond what you are expected to cope with in your normal daily living. That is why some very difficult physical and/ or emotional reactions or responses are to be expected.

These reactions are normal responses to a highly stressful and

abnormal event. These reactions may be difficult, but it is important to understand that they are normal; others are having similar responses.

## What are common stress responses?

- Physical changes may include fatigue, headaches, heartburn, difficulty sleeping, nightmares, and loss or increase in appetite.
- Emotion and mental responses include confusion, anxiety, fear, denial or numbness, despair, depression, anger, outrage, grief, withdrawal, and feelings of helplessness. Poor concentration, flashbacks, and intrusive thoughts are also common, normal responses.

## When will I feel these things, and how long will they last?

- They usually happen immediately, and over time the stress responses will change in intensity, frequency, duration and character.
- The time it takes for emotional “wounds “ to heal varies. Much like the flu, traumatic stress reactions must run their course. No one can deny that this is a difficult experience, but it’s important to know the reactions are normal, and will ease with time.

## What can I do to feel better?

- The passing of time will help and talking things out will help, too. In fact, it is crucial that you “talk out” your experiences. Withdrawal and “sealing over” can make things worse. Talk it out with loved ones, peers, friends, clergy, or counselors - anyone who cares and is a good listener.
- Avoid alcohol and drug abuse. Alcohol is a depressant, and both alcohol and drugs prolong the pain of the traumatic event.
- Take care of yourself by eating healthy foods, exercising (within your limits), getting plenty of rest, and staying in touch with people who care.

## What if I begin to feel worse?

- Sometimes the intensity of your reactions may increase, or a reaction may be prolonged. This does not mean that you are weak or “crazy.” It simply means that the event was so powerful that it pushed you far past your normal coping experiences. If things worsen, seek help from someone who can assist you.

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## Facts about substance abuse

- The total economic cost of alcohol and drug abuse in Washington state was \$2.54 billion in 1996. This represents \$531 for every non-institutionalized resident – a 55 percent increase from 1990.
- The number of meth labs in Washington has risen 20-fold since 1990. From 1994-1998, admissions to state-funded treatment for injections drug users of meth more than doubled.
- Substance abuse is a major contributor to continued high rates of child abuse and neglect. In this state, 67 percent of parents or guardians of children placed in group or foster care have a substance abuse problem.
- For each public dollar invested in alcohol/drug treatment, \$3.71 is saved in medical care and criminal justice costs over the following four years.
- Adolescents who receive treatment report fewer school discipline problems and higher grades.
- Emergency room visits during state-funded outpatient treatment decreased from 31 percent to four percent compared to the year prior to treatment.

Source: 2000 Report on Tobacco, Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Trends in Washington State